

COUNCILMEMBER O'BRIEN

2017 DISTRICT 6 REPORT



DISTRICT 6 OVERVIEW

HOW THIS REPORT WAS COMPILED



Throughout 2017, Councilmember O'Brien and staff attended community meetings, connected with constituents, hosted office hours and community conversations, and heard from constituents via mail, email, and phone. Based on this input, we put together a report reflecting what constituents in District 6 (Northwest Seattle) said and what we as an office accomplished. While the issues we chose to write on are comprehensive, this by no means reflects all of the input and outcomes that happened throughout the year. Feel free to reach out to us for further feedback at Mike.Obrien@Seattle.gov.

SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORTATION

What constituents said in the district

A lot of our feedback related to growth, and the related need for a better transportation system, particularly transit. Constituents who live in District 6 expressed the need for better West to East connections, more bus stops and routes, and more reliable and efficient buses during rush hour. There were concerns about the connections between downtown and the district, as many Rapid Rides were too slow and express routes were too packed. Some called for prioritizing and dedicating space on the road for transit.

Various other issues came to the forefront this year, including better safety in high-traffic areas and around neighborhoods, clearer signage, addressing safety on the Ballard Bridge, investing in low-cost alternatives to sidewalks, and free transit for youth.

At the same time, Councilmember O'Brien also heard from constituents about the importance of addressing climate change. Since the largest contributor of US (and Seattle) greenhouse gas emissions comes from transportation, our office sees these two issues as inextricably linked.



What our office worked on in 2017

SUSTAINABILITY

After President Trump announced his intentions to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord in June, Councilmember O'Brien sponsored a Resolution that was unanimously adopted by Council to affirm our commitment to the Accord, including the potential to go beyond Seattle's already ambitious Climate Action Plan. Councilmember O'Brien expects a report from Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment early this year identifying the "key climate actions necessary to meet or exceed the goals ratified by the Paris Agreement, such that Seattle is doing its part to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, while advancing Seattle's goals for a just and sustainable future." Councilmember O'Brien will prioritize implementing the actions listed in the report in the coming year. If the United States Government and Donald Trump aren't going to take climate change seriously, then cities and states must come together to step up.

INVESTMENTS IN REDUCING CONGESTION

It is inspiring to see that while Seattle has added 20,000 new residents in 2016, we did not add to our vehicle traffic volumes. That means that more and more people are either taking transit, walking, or biking to get around Seattle. Next year, with the anticipated closing of the downtown bus tunnel, the demolition of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, and more people moving into the region, there will be even more buses and vehicles on our streets than ever before. The City, in partnership with Metro, Sound Transit, and the Downtown Seattle Association, has created the One Center City Initiative to help address these challenges. In 2017, One Center City has identified several near-term actions to improve transit travel times and protect bicyclists and pedestrians, even as downtown Seattle will have enormous transportation constraints in the next few years. You can learn more at www.onecentercity.org. Our office supports these actions and will do what we can to make sure these are implemented in 2018.



TRANSIT SERVICE



In addition to building the needed infrastructure, Seattle is investing in increased transit service through the revenue generated by 2014's Proposition 1. Service on many routes increased by 30% in the last couple of years, allowing ridership to also significantly increase. In 2015, only 25% of households were within walking distance of transit that came every 15 minutes or less; now 64% of households are served by frequent transit. And as we continue to partner with King County Metro to enhance transit service, our priority will be to make sure that people can easily access and afford this service. In 2017, Councilmember O'Brien sponsored a Resolution supporting SDOT's Transportation Equity Program, and sponsored additional resources to grow the program and develop a Transportation Equity Agenda. Our hope is that this program will help guide strategic investments in making transit accessible and affordable for all.

Last year Councilmember O'Brien also championed the expansion of the City's Commute Trip Reduction program, and greater assistance for employers to establish pre-tax transit benefits – allowing employees to use pre-tax income to purchase transit passes, saving between 25 and 40 percent on their transit costs. This year Councilmember O'Brien will work with businesses to continue to expand this program.

VISION ZERO

Seattle's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Analysis (BPSA) is an exciting tool that we started to implement in 2017 as we work toward Vision Zero – zero fatal or serious injuries from collisions. The BPSA helps the City prioritize safety improvements based on several conditions that predict the possibility of crashes. The BPSA also helped inform Seattle's Pedestrian Master Plan. Because building a complete sidewalk on every block in Seattle would cost billions of dollars, the question becomes: how does the City prioritize and fund pedestrian infrastructure in the coming years? This includes not only sidewalks, but curb ramps, signal improvements, street crossings, and sidewalk repair. Last year, when Council adopted the PMP, Councilmember O'Brien requested SDOT to come back to Council with an Implementation Plan that further refined its prioritization for the coming years, and expanded its use of low-cost "pathways" – walkways along the road that cost significantly less than a traditional sidewalk but still provide some separation from vehicles.

BURKE GILMAN

After more than 17 years of process and appeals, the completion of the Burke Gilman Missing Link is within sight. Last year, after strong advocacy from community members (including Councilmember O'Brien), businesses, and organizations like the Nordic Heritage Museum, the City released a final preferred route and convened a Design Advisory Committee that provided feedback to improve trail design and balance the safety and needs of all users. The Final Environmental Impact Statement was appealed to the City's Hearing Examiner, who should issue a final ruling at the end of the month. If Seattle prevails on the appeal, the City should begin construction mid-2018.

SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORTATION



Sustainability & Transportation

Looking to 2018

Councilmember O'Brien is proud to support the Seattle Department of Transportation's continued focus on creating a City where everyone can safely get around by foot, transit, or bike, when possible. These investments are critical to reducing congestion and creating a livable and sustainable city.

To further these goals, last year Councilmember O'Brien sponsored funding to examine issues related to diversion and congestion on local streets due to tolling on SR-99. WSDOT is bringing tolling to Seattle, with the opening of the new State Route 99 tunnel through downtown. That means that we are likely to experience diversion on our streets by people looking to avoid tolls. Early models indicate that this diversion could have a significant negative impact on congestion on city streets and be specifically detrimental to transit and freight travel times. The study, to be conducted in 2018, would focus on the broader equity implications of congestion pricing in Seattle (particularly who is driving at what times) and explore options to minimize diversion so that transit service continues to operate reliably.

With a more comprehensive look at the impact of tolling the SR-99 tunnel, combined with 2018 actions to get One Center City moving, increased transit investments, more targeted safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists (including the completion of the Burke Gilman Missing Link) and more affordable transit, Councilmember O'Brien is hopeful that we will continue to see reductions in vehicle congestion and more mobility for all forms of transportation.

HOMELESSNESS

What constituents said in the district

A concern our office heard multiple times in 2017 was the continuing growth of the unsheltered population. Many wanted the priority to be ushering people off the streets and into housing, while others wanted to focus on some of the root causes of homelessness, which include housing unaffordability, the opioid epidemic, income inequality, and disproportionate impacts on people of color, women, the LGBTQ community, and other vulnerable populations. To prevent people from living outdoors, District 6 residents have expressed the need for more low-barrier shelters, 24/7 shelters, and shelters for families and pets.

One hotly debated topic was around encampment removal. Some did not want encampments removed unless they were a danger to others or themselves, citing the instability of the removal process harming more than hurting. Most of those District 6 residents wanted “sweeps” funding to be redirected to other responses to the homelessness crisis. Others wanted the City to continue to remove encampments while offering outreach to services citing the Navigation Team’s work this year.

Lastly, an issue particularly affecting District 6 involves unsheltered neighbors living in their vehicles. In 2017, 40% of the unsheltered homeless population were people living in vehicles. As solutions to address vehicular living were being developed, many critiqued those ideas as “band-aid solutions” (including utilizing unused or donated spaces for those in their vehicles). However, some pushed back on that idea, stating that as housing is getting more expensive, vehicular living is often the next step and the City needs to address it before the situation becomes far worse.

BUDGET INVESTMENTS

The Council passed a number of items that ensured that essential services already in place would not be rolled back, such as funding for emergency shelter serving over 230 survivors of domestic and sexual violence, maintaining existing permanent supportive housing services, ensuring two transitional housing programs for homeless foster youth do not close, sustaining support for a homeless child care program, and continued funding for homeless youth employment programs. In addition, Councilmember O'Brien co-sponsored the following budget proposals that add to our homelessness response:

- Funding for expansion of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) to our North Precinct
- Funding for the creation of a safe consumption site to ensure people have a safe place consume and receive treatment advice from trained nurses
- Funding for a new homeless youth opportunity center in Capitol Hill
- Support for tenant outreach and support services
- Funding for two additional authorized encampments to provide people safe temporary places to be

ENCAMPMENT REMOVALS PROCESS

How we get people who are living outdoors into more stable living situations continues to be a struggle. The city's Navigation Team (a combination of police officers and outreach workers) has had some success in getting more people into shelter in the past year. This is in part because we have put more resources into outreach and in part because we had a significant increase in shelter options for people (Georgetown tiny-house village, Navigation Center and Compass First Hill shelters, and two new sanctioned tent encampments all opened up this year). **It is critical that as we move people experiencing homelessness we give them better shelter options to choose from.**

To that end, in this budget cycle, we increased requirements about notice and reporting so that the council and the public have more clarity on when and where sweeps are happening and who is ending up in shelter and who simply moves to the next unsanctioned encampment. We are also requiring recommendations on how to improve the outcomes in this system.

This system will continue to be a struggle until we get significantly more affordable housing options, continue to add better shelter options, and reduce the number of people entering homelessness.

Homelessness Looking to 2018

Despite our 2018 investments, our office believes we need to invest at a much larger scale to make a dent in the homelessness crisis we are facing, especially given the continued defunding of housing, addiction treatment, and mental health services from the federal and state government. The problems around housing and homelessness have continued to grow at a pace faster than we can address at the City.

The task force created by Resolution 31782 is expected develop recommendations for a dedicated progressive revenue source to support people experiencing or at high-risk for homelessness and to raise no less than \$25 million a year. This task force will deliver recommendations by

February 26, 2018, and the Council intends to take legislative action by March 26, 2018.

With this potential additional revenue, combined with a renewed focus on a regional, county-wide strategy, our office is hopeful we can more comprehensively address this crisis. This year I will continue to focus on developing a strategy for people living in vehicles, including expanding the popular Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program to address vehicular infractions in the North Precinct, and supporting more resources for safe zones, low-barrier shelters, and housing.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & EQUITABLE GROWTH

What constituents said in the district

Many District 6 residents continue to be concerned with the growth of the city and the displacement that comes with it. The question that residents continuously asked was “how do we keep Seattle affordable with the increasing amount of growth?” Many answered that we need to make room for more people; whether that's through serious changes in density or single family zoning, or affordability strategies such as making it easier to build backyard cottages. Others expressed focusing on what we already have, such as only allowing small-scale rentals to participate in short-term rentals, or utilizing unused space including surplus properties.

Affordable housing conversations were not exclusive to policies, but also around what we fund and who we support. Many District 6 residents expressed the need to increase and invest in limited equity housing cooperatives (LEHCs), and community land trusts (CLTs). Some have also supported creating mixed-income housing with services on-site. As to the people this housing should support, there has been debate in our district around focusing on housing for middle-income earners, the working poor, and the most vulnerable who lack sustainable incomes. People were also concerned about residents and businesses at high risk for displacement from currently more affordable neighborhoods. How do we help keep people in place?.

What our office worked on in 2017



BACKYARD COTTAGE LEGISLATION

Based on a decision from the City's Hearing Examiner in December 2016, the City of Seattle is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to review the potential environmental impacts of the proposal to make it easier for more homeowners to build backyard cottages and in-law units in Seattle and provide more housing options for Seattle renters. Throughout the EIS process, there are opportunities for community members to weigh in on the analysis, and we encourage you to do so. The Draft EIS will be published in the Spring of 2018 and the Final EIS in Summer 2018. Following the final review, we will work to reintroduce legislation. In addition, our office has been working with our Office of Housing and interested community partners to explore opportunities to create ADUs with rent and income restrictions to add to our affordable housing stock. We continue to hear a lot of energy from individuals who want to help address the housing and homelessness crisis in our city, and we hope to make it more feasible for homeowners to create these opportunities soon.

SHORT TERM RENTAL REGULATIONS

In 2017, we passed legislation regulating our short-term rental market. Regulations will limit the number of STRs any individual can rent out, thus limiting the number of housing units that can be removed from the long-term rental market. Working closely with community partners from Puget Sound Sage, we passed a number

of amendments to the base legislation including restricting STRs to an individual's primary residence and one additional unit (as opposed to any two units), with some exceptions. The final policy will still enable homeowners to generate additional income by providing STRs in their primary residence, which we understand provides important economic stability to many. In addition to regulations and requiring a business license from STR operators and web platforms, the Council also passed a tax on STRs, which is set at \$14/night/full unit or \$8/night/shared room.

Our office worked to ensure that the resources generated from the tax fund the City's Equitable Development Initiative- placed-based economic development projects led by communities most at risk of displacement. These projects, often coupled with affordable housing, are an essential part of our anti-displacement strategy. The regulations will go into effect in 2019.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP MODELS

Over the last year and a half, our office has continued to explore ways the City can support efforts to build new models for affordable housing and community ownership. **We see community ownership of land and housing as a key piece of addressing affordability in the city-- by getting property out of the speculative market and into the hands of non-profits, community organizations, and public entities.** In particular, we continue to explore community land trusts and limited equity housing coops as exciting models. This budget cycle, we secured \$150K to support capacity building for these types of models and are working closely with the Office of Housing to help make a few of these projects a reality in the year ahead. We are also coordinating closely with King County's Communities of Opportunity Initiative, recognizing that displacement is a regional issue.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & EQUITABLE GROWTH



Affordable Housing & Equitable Growth

LOOKING TO 2018

As we look to 2018, District 6 certainly has growing equitably in mind. Residents have expressed excitement around lobbying for rent control at the state level. Others want continued investments in community ownership models and income-restricted housing. Two of our Seattle City Light properties may become affordable housing, and from what we heard in the community, people want more surplus properties going to housing by directly building on the property or selling it at market rate and reinvesting the proceeds.

2018 will be a big year for the Housing Affordability Livability Agenda's Mandatory Housing Affordability (HALA/MHA). In 2017, the Council passed legislation to approve MHA in Uptown, the Chinatown-International District, parts of the Central District, Downtown, South Lake Union, and the University District. In 2018, we will review the proposed legislation and vote on implementation citywide. What is MHA exactly? **If approved citywide, all new commercial and multifamily residential development will contribute to affordable**

housing by providing units onsite or by having developers contribute to the Office of Housing to create affordable housing. In exchange, developers can add more development capacity most commonly through height.

District 6 residents have engaged with our office in regards to outreach and education around the MHA legislation, which is over 300 pages long. Residents have expressed a need for:

- Better maps with cleaner impacts with visualizations of neighborhood changes
- Support for community groups
- Email updates
- Community meetings with residents and businesses
- Door to door canvassing to distribute info
- A single website with accurate, clearly written information

We look forward to engaging with District 6 on this further.

PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Councilmember O'Brien's office continues to support diversion programs and services as more effective and compassionate approaches to public safety and criminal justice. Diverting people from facing jail time or hefty fines, and actually addressing the root cause of their actions, reduces repeat offenses and creates long-term positive outcomes for individuals and the community. Councilmember O'Brien is particularly passionate about achieving a vision for zero use of youth detention, for which he championed continued funding to go towards organizations working on that issue.

The office has also continued to be involved in planning for a revived Community Service Officer Program, which Councilmember O'Brien secured funding for starting in 2017, and is slated to begin operating by mid-2018. During their initial creation, Community Service Officers (CSOs) connected vulnerable populations with services and provided an important link between the community and the police department. CSOs patrolled areas serving populations such as unsheltered individuals, disabled, runaway youth, and the elderly. They mediated neighborhood disputes; provided basic counseling and social services referrals; participated in crime prevention activities, among other duties.

What constituents said in the district

District 6 residents gave input on what the CSO program should look like next year. They expressed an intentionality of selecting CSOs from diverse backgrounds and from communities they serve, and many did not want CSOs to carry guns.

Examples of CSO work brainstormed by constituents include:

- Addressing issues dealing with those who are experiencing homelessness or substance abuse
- Dispute/conflict management
- "Next Door" issues
- Mental health crises
- Addressing ICE threats
- Training in de-escalation, mental health, anti-bias, and social work

What our office worked on in 2017

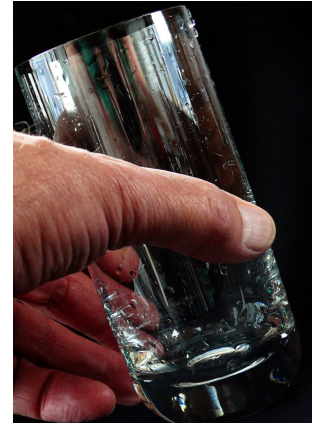
To prepare for the implementation of the CSO program in 2018, a team of City staff from many departments, including a representative from Councilmember O'Brien's office, engaged the community members to guide development and implementation of the programs to address the impacts on racial equity. This team conducted over 40 community meetings, many focused on those most impacted by the criminal justice system, to understand what the role, training, priorities, etc. of the new generation of CSOs should be. We heard a lot of feedback, consistent with the District's, on the need for a more people-centered approach to public safety, and the need to de-escalate situations and serve the most vulnerable. All the information we gathered will inform the initial rollout later this year.

Looking to 2018

The CSO program will begin with only a few officers, but Councilmember O'Brien's hope is that we can expand the program rapidly once it gets off the ground.



SUGARY BEVERAGE TAX



What constituents said in the district

Many constituents agreed health was the primary reason they would support the sugary beverage tax, noting that although there would be revenue, the idea is to change behavior. One person made the argument that there is a “health cost” to sugary drinks and the impact and reduction are worth the increase in taxation. Still, some constituents expressed concerns with classism, targeting communities, and the regressivity of the tax.

There was agreement that many in the sugary beverage industries target those in the low-income bracket and children, the most impacted communities. Constituents agreed that these communities should be at the table when making decisions. **If the Council approved the sugary beverage tax, there was consensus that healthy food access should be a priority from the revenue.** Constituents suggested that the local, organic, and/or healthy food should go to the most impacted communities.

What our office worked on in 2017

In June of 2017, the Council passed a Sugary Beverage Tax on the distributors of sugary beverages such as sodas. Implementation of the tax begins on January 1, 2018, with the goals of lowering sugary drink consumption and raising new revenue to ensure low-income communities and communities of color who are most impacted by the negative health outcomes of sugary beverage consumption, will have access to healthy foods. Working with community partners including Got Green, we were able to ensure

that the communities most impacted by health inequities would define how we invest the generated revenue. In particular, **the majority of funding will be dedicated to increasing food access and closing the food security gap, ensuring that people who may not qualify for food stamps but are tight on resources don't have to choose between healthy food and meeting their other basic needs.** The tax rate is set at 1.75 cents per ounce, which means the tax would be about \$1.18 for a 2-liter bottle of soda.

THANK YOU!

As always, feel free to reach out to us for further feedback at Mike.Obrien@Seattle.gov. Thank you for engaging in 2017, and we look forward to serving you in 2018!

TEAM O'BRIEN



MIKE O'BRIEN



LAKECIA FARMER



SUSIE LEVY



JASMINE
MARWAHA



JESSE RAWLINS



EUGENE CHOI



MATT KANTER



SAKIN IBRAHIM